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CLUB STORIES

Washington State Federation
of Women's Clubs



Lowman & Hanford Co.
Seattle, Wash.
1915

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REASONS

Twenty-two short stories were written by Washington club women in a contest conducted by our state literature committee. At the federation convention held in Spokane last June, the decision of the judges was announced, the two stories ranking highest were read and the enterprise was supposed to be happily ended.

Some one said : "Publish them or at least a dozen of them." The idea grew. There are now fifteen thousand club women in the state. We are all more or less interested in each other's work and would want to read the stories. And so primarily they are printed for our own club family and any profit from the publication goes to the state endowment fund.

There is another reason. Under the conditions of the contest, the plot of each story was to be laid in the Evergreen State. The result is they are full of local color and have a value aside from their literary worth.

Gentle reader or competent critic, whichever you may be, if you enjoy only the literature that is immortal you would better pass this little volume by and reach up to the five-foot shelf for a classic; if you must be thrilled or spell-bound, it were safer for you to buy or borrow a best-seller; but if you have broad sympathies and a heart that warms toward your kind, we are confident that you will find something to like in our stories.

CLUB WOMEN OF WASHINGTON.

October the first, 1915.

Four-Leaf Clover

I know a place where the sun is like gold,
And the cherry blooms burst with snow,
And down underneath is the loveliest nook,
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

One leaf is for hope, and one is for faith,
And one is for love, you know,
And God put another one in for luck—
If you search, you will find where they grow.

But you must have hope and you must have faith
You must love and be strong, and so,
If you work, if you wait, you will find the place
Where the four-leaf clovers grow.

—ELLA HIGGINSON.

The mountain-lover does not always gaze at Rainier or Olympus. He has learned that the foothills have a charm and an interest of their own. And they too point upward.

Rhododendrons

AWARDED FIRST PRIZE

I watched impatiently the men unwrap the picture they had brought. It was a painting of Valmer's, a gift from Val himself. To possess a work of his brush, was to be envied by the most discriminating collectors; it was to be classed with the "fortunate rich;" it was to be numbered with the ultra-faddists of the hour, for Valmer's work had created nothing less than a storm of interest in every quarter.

There was a power and fullness and beauty in his work which held withal a subtle, sensitive quality, difficult to define. It was a compelling, unexplainable thing of mind and soul that lay behind vision and technique, and its message never failed to reach me, in my exacting and saddening work as an alienist, with a touch that refreshed and restored my questioning soul.

Valmer, tall, lean, distinguished-looking, followed close upon his gift. The lion of the hour, complimented and courted, he had remained singularly untouched by the world, with a heart dedicated wholly to his art, and to one friendship. For me, I believe, he reserved the only confidences he ever gave, and our friendship was a fine, close-knitted thing. We lighted cigars and Valmer adjusted the shades.

Rhododendrons

“Ah! Rhododendrons! I can smell them, Val! Smell them? Why I feel the little puffs of warm air that blow over them from the sun-heated Sound.” With a sigh of anticipation I sank into a chair before the picture, scarce hearing Valmer’s low, “Flatterer, you inveterate flatterer!”

I was lost at once in the suggestion of the scene. Rhododendrons! I had seen such a bank. Where? Where? I seemed conscious of a familiar, composite breath, as of the sea and sappy green things and the faint exhalation of rhododendrons. It carried me back as an actual odor will often do, and I saw again the great building where I had spent the first years of practice and training in the calling I had chosen. It was the state hospital for the insane.

The Washington State Asylum stood on a gentle slope commanding distant glimpses of the Sound. Behind it rose great, tonic firs and, on the south and west, acres of flowering shrubs mingled with the evergreen of cedar, fir and madrone. Heavenly surroundings for so sad a place. The hapless inmates were gray shadows in my memory now. One only stood out in sharp relief, a wild-eyed youth who had come, emaciated and unkempt, clinging to a battered, black box. He had been assigned to my ward and proved quiet and docile when left undisturbed to paint hideous forms which he seemed to wipe out only to repeat over and over again on the same canvas. We were overworked at the time, so beyond ordering nourishing food and comparative freedom for the boy, a month perhaps elapsed before I could give him more specific attention.

Rhododendrons

One day, observing the lad stooping over his easel at a point where a bank of rhododendrons was massed in full bloom against the blue sky and distant Sound, I turned my steps in his direction. He paid not the slightest attention to me as I drew near, though a scowl darkened his thin face. I looked over the narrow back at the canvas he was eternally bending over, and then I did the unfor-givable thing. I forgot professional caution and cried out at what I saw.

The rose and mauve of that bank of bloom was there, a living, glowing mass of color, blending away into the silver and azure of the sky and Sound, and it was done with the accuracy and power of genius. In my astonishment I had relaxed my watchfulness over the sullen figure and in another moment I had caught the thin arm in a quick strong grip, but to my utter dismay, I was too late. With coarse, mad strokes he had drawn a hideous form across the exquisite thing.

“Boy—boy,” I actually sobbed, “what have you done—what have you done?”

I had retained my grip on the thin arm but with unlooked-for strength he tore himself free and sprang to his feet. He faced me with the look of a lost soul in his gaze, then flung himself face downward on the ground, shaking with hoarse, rending sobs. I threw myself beside the poor, attenuated form, filled with compassion for the anguish that must be his in this hour of revelation. Had reason come to him for a moment to show him the divine thing he held within his breast only to leave him

Rhododendrons

again in the dark shadow where his soul had dwelt? I stroked the neglected hair and held the stained hand in my own.

“Harold, my boy, my poor boy, come, we’ll cure you yet! Why, we send numbers away every year. If you will obey me and take the food and other things I order, you’ll do that again, and, my boy, I could sell a few of those pictures for enough to send you to the best specialists in the country.” At my words the boy sat erect.

“Could you sell that?” he demanded excitedly, pointing to the defaced picture.

“Yes, and sometime,” I added soothingly, “you’ll again paint like that.”

“Paint like that!” he cried, “why, I have been doing nothing else! I tell you,” he hurried on, his voice rising, “I have made dozens of sketches like that, and though it almost killed me, I covered them with those hellish things. I had to you see, I was afraid to let anyone see them.”

“Yes, yes,” I replied sadly as I saw his increasing excitement, “Come, shall we walk back to the house?” But he refused to be diverted.

“Doctor, Doctor,” he repeated, rather wildly now, “you promise to sell that if I do it again?”

“I promise,” I humored him.

“Then listen, listen! I am not insane—no more than you are. You won’t be angry with me? I *had* to paint. My father was an artist, and so poor I think he and my mother must have died from starvation soon after they came west—when I was about ten. I used to paint with my father. He

Rhododendrons

was proud of me and would say I had it in me to become a great painter; and because of his words, but most of all because of something inside me, I have worked and starved to buy paint and canvas—but I starved too often and I became ill. There were times when I felt faint and dazed, but always, I knew I must paint. One day—I stole some tubes. I was taken some place—to jail, I suppose. When the doctors questioned me, I was too tired to care how I answered—

“Then—then—I came here and you allowed me to paint—to spend all day in work, and it was so beautiful, it was like—like heaven to me. I couldn’t work fast enough to make sketches of all I wanted to study. It wasn’t food I had been starving for—it was just—a chance like this. Then a terrible fear came over me. I was in an agony of dread lest I be sent away. I was afraid to show my work, I was afraid to ask for another canvas, and to keep up the appearance of insanity, I would paint over the things I loved the horrible shapes you have seen. It wasn’t right—it wasn’t honest; but I thought if I ate very little—and now if you sell my pictures I can pay—you are not angry, Doctor?”

I could not answer for the aching pressure in my throat. In the imploring eyes that burned into mine, was no trace of dementia, and I knew I was looking into the soul of one anointed, who had kept the faith, almost at the cost of the frail body. I could only throw my arm about the slender form and draw him to the grassy seat beside me. There

Rhododendrons

we sat and talked until the shrubs above us cast long shadows like giant crow's-feet across the path and my name was called in the distance.

"And some day, you say, I may go abroad to study?"

"In a year's time; I pledge it, if it takes the last sou you and I can earn."

I left him there among the rhododendrons, a measureless gratitude in his eyes. And that was twenty years ago!

On my hand the ashes from my forgotten cigar fell soft and warm as a breath of that May day as Valmer's lean arm slipped over the back of my chair. I was scarce roused from the spell his picture had cast and his vibrant voice came like an echo to my thoughts:

"Doctor, it was twenty years ago today!"

Susan's Mountain

Travelers passing through the town of Pasco are wont to comment on the long row of red houses which are rented by the Northern Pacific railway company to their employees and which are so alike in color, size and style of architecture that to the casual observer there are no distinguishing features.

During the summer months of the present time their ugly color and harsh lines are quite concealed and softened by green vines and shade trees, and the lawns are spacious and well kept; but six or seven years ago any little bird would have told you that there wasn't a decent tree in Pasco, the lusty poplars and strong-limbed locusts of today being then only slips of promise.

From the station the eyes are now delighted with the smooth macadamized pavement and concrete walks, and the illumination at night of numerous cluster lights gives the place quite a metropolitan aspect, but at the time of this narrative, the streets, billowy with sand, were flanked with uneven, nail-studded board walks, and citizens went abroad at night in the perils of darkness.

It was at this unattractive period that Susan Wells, the wife of a locomotive engineer, lived in number sixteen in the Row; and on this particular day she was there alone, wretched in body and spirit.

It was in July and it would have been exceedingly hot in the shade, had there been any shade, and Jim

Susan's Mountain

and she had had their first quarrel! Now he had gone out on his run, and she had not even put up his lunch or said good-bye.

Many women under the stress of similar emotions would have indulged in a good cry, but Susan had such a horror of disorder that even now in genuine grief and anger it was characteristic of her that she should be sitting as she was, before the open door, only the tightly clasped hands and brown eyes mirroring the misery of her hour.

Before her a vast expanse of sage- and cactus-dotted plain stretched to where the Columbia shimmered placidly in the sun and waves of heat scintillated and danced in mocking spirals over the white sand of her front yard.

Visualizing, in marked contrast to this, the little white cottage with its lilacs and ivy they had left in the East, Susan, bitter in rebellion, felt that to the injury of giving up such comforts, Jim had added an unexpected insult in suggesting that they take his sister's little boys to raise as their own.

Naturally she, too, had been shocked by Nellie's sudden death and had sympathized with her husband, for she knew that he loved his sister and there was now no one to care for her children but him; yet she felt that she had been very magnanimous in offering to give up half her monthly allowance to assist in their maintenance in some institution, and at his uncalled for resentment at this disposal of the boys, she had angrily made it clear that any added burden to her already over-taxed strength was not to be considered. Now he had gone and she

Susan's Mountain

was unconsciously trying to justify her decision by summoning before her all the disagreeable phases of the situation.

Had she not swept and dusted and scrubbed continuously ever since coming to this dirt-infested region? And now to have the care of two *boys*!

Mechanically she noted that the atmosphere was assuming the haziness attendant upon the approach of a sand storm. The brilliancy of the sun was gradually dimming and a bank of pale coppery clouds was piling up in the west. A little current of air whirled into the room, raced madly through loose papers and sent cards and photographs flying.

With the hopelessness of a martyr, Susan began closing doors and windows and the fact that the air would consequently be agreeably cooled by the storm was no compensation to her for the work it would entail.

Loose clapboards began to flap, windows rattled, a dense gloom descended and the storm broke with furious vehemence.

Huge balls of dried "tumble weed" rolled merrily by, old papers sailed high in the air and the sand beat against the panes like rain.

All kinds of objects blew past and once an empty five-gallon kerosene can hurtled itself upon the porch and clattered into a corner. Across the street a tin bill-board, posting glaring inducements to buy land in the vicinity and the familiar slogan, "KEEP YOUR EYE ON PASCO," lurched drunkenly and crashed forward with deafening clamor.

The back door opened with a rush.

Susan's Mountain

“Anybody living?” called a woman’s voice.

It was Mrs. Allen who lived next door; she always announced her coming in this way and although Susan showed her disapproval of her familiar and easy manner the little neighbor seemed cheerfully impervious to rebukes and inuendoes. While Mrs. Allen was known to be a graduate of Wellesly and was a general favorite in the Row, the fact that she kept house with a total disregard of order and professed to enjoy sandstorms placed her without the pale of Susan’s regard.

“Isn’t this great!” she panted, plumping into a chair. “Billy and the kiddies are finishing up a two days’ mess of dishes and they sent me over here to keep you company.”

And “Billy” who was a very efficient civil engineer, openly adored this inconsequential little creature!

“But,” she rattled on, “I told them I was sure you’d be delighted with this storm, for now you would have a lot of new material for your mountain.”

“Mountain!” repeated Susan blankly.

“Why sure,” laughed Mrs. Allen. “You’re forever digging for dirt and I suppose you contemplate doing something with it eventually? Make a pyramid or some such monument to your life’s work. This,” indicating with a gesture the thick layer of fine sand now covering window sills and floor, “ought to cheer you up considerably.”

At that moment the telephone rang and in the interjectional conversation which followed, jests and

Susan's Mountain

commonplaces were eliminated by a cataclysm of real misfortune. Jim's engine had been wrecked. Yes, he was seriously injured and she must get ready at once to accompany him to Tacoma.

Afterward when her mind could adjust itself to normal thinking, she recalled with surprise that it was Mrs. Allen who had so capably managed her affairs for her in her distress and it had been to the little neighbor whom she had always regarded as frivolous and incompetent that she had turned in helpless subjection.

In the long days that followed, in the bare white room of the hospital, with nurses and doctors in grave-faced consultation over the bruised and broken body of her husband, she had ample time to realize her own impotence and the insignificance of the little things which had hitherto loomed so large on her mental horizon. And how many times in the innocent delirium of the sufferer was her selfishness paraded before her agonized consciousness.

"Sue, dear," he would murmur, brokenly; "they've put me into this clean bed with my greasy overalls on and you'll never get these sheets clean." And then—

"Honey, I wiped my bloody hands on that embroidered towel and the stains won't come out. Gee, look at the tracks I've made." Then he would start up and groan with the effort.

Sometimes he would think she was Nellie.

"Ah, little sis, don't cry! I can't help it. Sue's worked to death, digging and scrubbing all the

Susan's Mountain

time. I'll take care of your little boys, Nell, but Sue ain't strong and I dassen't take 'em home."

Once he laughed out heartily:

"There ain't nuthin' cuter 'n a little kid all smeared up like that with jam!"

The nurse smiled interrogatively into the wife's eyes, "You have a baby?"

Susan shook her head dully and a new pain crept into her already overladen heart.

The night came at last, when, the crisis safely over, the glad light of recognition and the weak pressure of his hand was Heaven itself for Susan; and in that moment she conceived a resolution the birth of which was to bring future happiness for all concerned.

Slowly but surely Jim regained strength and the time arived when he obtained his release and they were preparing to go home.

"Jim," faltered Susan on that morning, standing behind his chair and caressingly running her fingers through his thick ruddy hair, "I'm through working on my mountain."

"Mountain!" he ejaculated.

"Well, I'm not going to explain about that now, but I just want to tell you that the letter I got this morning was from Mrs. Allen." She handed it to him and smiled joyously into his bewildered eyes. "And she says that Nellie's boys, *our very own now*, for I've attended to all that since we've been here, arrived safely and will be at the station tomorrow when we get back to dear old Pasco!"

Old Jud Watkins

“Yes, siree, take it from me, every man that lives has hidden somewhere in his make-up, the soul of poetry,—or whatever you want to call it,—that something can touch at some time in his life to arouse in him—”

Old Jud Watkins turned toward me as he spoke, and catching a puzzled expression on my face,—inasmuch as I hadn’t the faintest idea of what had led to this unexpected peroration,—he stopped, gave a short embarrassed laugh, and explained:

“You see, I have been here alone so much that I sort of have the habit of talking with folks in imagination, and I start out and finish my side of the argument out loud and suddenly find that I have been doing all the previous talking just in my mind. So don’t mind me if I kind o’ surprise you at times.”

While speaking, he had been idly tapping on his knee with a letter which the rural route postman had brought a short time before, so I drew the natural inference that its contents had something to do with the old man’s thoughts.

Ill health had sent me away from my city home in the east to this ranch in the picturesque state of Washington, situated in the big bend of a wide river, where beyond the long, even stretch of meadow and grain field rose the snow-peaked mountains. It was an artist’s dream of the beautiful; but what

Old Jud Watkins

was more to me, it contained all that could be desired towards helping me to regain health and physical strength.

I had found this particular spot through an old friend, who was also a friend of Jud Watkins: and here I was, partly ranch hand, partly boarder, but best of all, the trusted and fortunate confidant of the old bachelor ranchman who was doing more with his quaint and wholesome logic and healthful habits, to put me back in my rightful place among men, than all else in the way of medicine and diet. Just how he had so vitally changed my own warped outlook upon the world and life in general, and set my feet firmly upon the safe and sane road to my individual happiness, is "another story" as Kipling used to say: and this is another's story, not mine.

Noting the interest in my eyes, old Jud Watkins reached over and tapped his pipe against the porch railing until it was emptied to his satisfaction, then carefully refilling and relighting it, continued his preface as though there had been no interruption.

"Yes siree; no matter what for looks a fellow might be, he still has some where within that 'divine spark' we read about, which somethin' can reach, if it comes jest at the right time; the 'psychological moment' they call it.

"You've heard me speak of Tom Millard,—'No-Speakum', the ranch hands named him,—who was here with me up to about a year ago? Well,—he was the one fellow who it seemed to me at times, was totally lacking in any spot through which he

Old Jud Watkins

could be reached. But I will tell you about him from the first.

“You see, he drifted in her one evening at dusk, about two years ago. Although he was footing it, I sized him up at once as not being an ordinary tramp, or for that matter, an ordinary fellow of any kind. He asked for a night’s lodging and as I never turn any one away, being so far from railroad stations and boat landings, I let him sleep down in one of the bunk houses. Next morning he offered to pay for everything, same as if he had stopped at some fine hotel. I told him to keep his money and his breath too,—as he started to insist,—for he might need ‘em both at some future time. He looked at me kind o’ queer, and then dropped down on an old piece of machinery and sat still so long, gazing off into the mountains that I wondered what ailed the man. He seemed to have forgotten my presence and everything else and it was plain that somethin’ was bothering him terrible. After a long time he kind o’ roused up and asked me how far it was to the nearest postoffice. I told him, but it didn’t occur to me to mention that I was on a rural delivery route. My answer seemed to satisfy him on some point, for he nodded his head as if he was answering some question to himself. Pretty soon he looked up at me and asked abruptly: ‘Can I work here for you,—for my board?’ I didn’t know jest what to say for a minute then I told him that I wouldn’t be needing help much till a month or so later when harvest would begin; but

Old Jud Watkins

as I talked I watched his face, and such a look of disappointment settled on it that I finished by saying that if he really wished to, he could work for his board until that time, and then if he wanted to make a regular harvest hand, I would pay him the usual wages. I won't soon forget the look of gratitude he gave me, and it set me to wondering what was back of it all; why a man of his brains and polish should be so grateful for permission to bury himself out here on my quiet ranch; and what it was that had left such a mark on his face.

"Well—he stayed on, and I grew to know as much about him as I do of that tallest mountain peak over there,—which has never been climbed. I couldn't talk to him, cause if a fellow talks too long to himself he begins to realize he's logy; and talking to that man was sure like talking to yourself when you don't expect an answer. After a while I quit. When the harvest hands came later on they tried as I had done, to pick up some kind of conversation with him, and with the same results. Some fellow gave him the nick-name 'No-Speakum,' and that was all he was known by from then on. To me he was 'Tom', for that was what he had told me to call him, and I never knew what his last name was until after he had been here about six months. One day the postman (and I never will forget the look of surprise and anger that came over Tom's face that first time he saw the rural delivery man come by here!) left a letter here addressed to Mr. T. J. Millard. I called after the fellow as he started away,—I had gone down to the mail box when I saw him coming,

Old Jud Watkins

‘Here, this is a mistake; there is nobody here by the name of Millard.’ As the postman started back, Tom, who was near, spoke up quick as though he had forgotten for the moment, ‘Here, it is for me.’ I didn’t say anything of course, but just handed the letter to him, and the postman went on. But man alive! When he looked at that letter and seemed to recognize the handwriting, I never saw such a look on any man’s face as was on his! He turned chalky white first, then his eyes blazed like coals of fire and he shook like a fellow with the ague. I pretended not to notice. He hurried into the house, caught up a pen and jambled it down into the ink bottle, wrote something on the face of the envelope after scratching off part of the address, then rushed out of the house and ran a quarter of a mile like a madman until he overtook the postman and gave him that letter.

“For days after that, he seemed like a man in a dream,—and a mighty unhappy one at that! I said very little to him, and aside from asking the necessary questions, or answering one, he was more silent than ever, if that were possible.

“Of course my curiosity was aroused by this strange man. What could his past be? Certainly he was not a criminal! nor was he a fugitive from the law. (I won’t say ‘justice’.) He had as high a sense of honor as any man I know, and I would have trusted him with anything.

“About a month later, another letter came. This time Tom wasn’t at the house and I did not get the mail until after the postman was out of sight. It

Old Jud Watkins

was addressed same as the first one, and I noticed the writing this time as I carried the mail to the house. It was a fine handwriting, surely a woman's and easier to read than most of 'em. If what they say is true about character showing up in one's writing, I should have said the writer of that letter was a good woman. Still,—you never can tell. Look at the writing of Jim Turner; clear cut and fine as a copy book, and goodness, that fellow just seems as if he never could be straight. And then again, do you recall the handwriting of some of our best men? Crooked and wobbly, as though they had no backbone. I never could see as the handwriting is much of a test. But I'm gettin' off my story: When Tom came into the house and found that letter lying there on the table, I just put it there without calling his attention to it, as I didn't know what else to do,—that same look of white rage came into his face, and it almost made me afraid of him as if he could lay the blame on me. I was busy with the newspapers that are always about a week old when they reach here you know, and a fellow is pretty anxious to know what's going on in the world. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw Tom take the pen as savagely as he did before, and scratch the address and write something else on it, then as if he was afraid of having the letter in the house, he went down to the mailbox and threw it in, although the postman wouldn't be by until next day.

“In about a month, another one came. Now I suppose I did something that some fussy folks would say wasn't just square, but I don't care.

Old Jud Watkins

Sometimes I think the end justifies the means, and this wasn't a thing that disturbed my conscience so's I couldn't sleep. When I took some of my own mail down for the postman to collect, I picked up the letter Tom had thrown into the box same as the others, and looked at it. As I say, I picked it up and looked carefully at what Tom had written on it, so's to remember it.

"He had written 'Return to sender,' and in the corner was the name 'Mrs. T. J. Millard, Winnsboro, South Carolina.' So he was married. His wife had been writing to him, and he had been returning the letters to her, un-opened. And he was a Southerner. I had suspected as much from his talk; one of those hot-headed, proud sons of the South who are governed by rash hearts instead of cool heads.

"I was puzzling over the whole strange situation that evening when Tom suddenly spoke to me in a tone that made me fairly jump, intent as my mind was on him. 'There won't be much work for the next few weeks; I'm going on a long tramp up into the mountains.'

"He was gone for about two weeks. When he came back his face was thinner and more worn than ever with such a tired look in his eyes that I pitied him in my heart. No matter where the fault lay, that man was suffering the torments of hell! When I looked at him and realized what a woman can do with a man's heart,—well, I felt deeply

Old Jud Watkins

thankful that I had been left with some sweeter memories than had been this man's portion.

"Well,—I'm a bit ahead of my story again. While he was gone, I got busy. I had carefully made a note of his wife's address, so one night when I sat thinking the matter over, I wrote a letter to her. I told her who I was and that Mr. Millard lived with me here on my ranch. And then as carefully as I could, so's not to fumble things, I asked her where the trouble lay,—in case she wished me to know,—and offered as delicately as I could, to be of help to them both if she would let me. I knew I run a big risk of getting into trouble and bein' told to mind my own business.

"Well,—I mailed that letter and then watched for an answer like some love-sick swain, hoping it would escape the sharp eyes of Tom. It came one day when Tom was on the far side of the ranch. And such a letter! Man that I am, I'm not ashamed to tell you that the tears were running down my old cheeks before I laid it down! That poor little girl didn't spare herself; she told me everything,—and I believed her! And right then and there I vowed I'd do everything in my power to help her—and that meant him too, of course.

"No need to go into the details of her story. An up-to-date story writer could have made out of it one of those three-sided affairs that magazine readers go crazy over; only this one, being a true story, didn't have the kind of spice that makes good reading to some folks. This woman was a *good* woman. I knew it.

Old Jud Watkins

“I pondered over it for days and weeks, trying to see what I could do without spoiling everything in clumsy, man fashion.

“One night some neighbors were in and we were sitting around the fire here,—it was in early spring,—and the talk turned on a murder trial the papers were full of at that time. A man had been found dead on a train, and poison had been found in an empty bottle that had contained whiskey which he had evidently drunk. The man had a handsome wife and they had not been on the best of terms; in order to make everlasting fame for himself, some young state’s attorney had the wife thrown into prison and was making desperate efforts to prove her a murderer. Luck seemed against him. The outcome was still in doubt at this time.

“While we were discussing this point, I had a sudden inspiration. With all the eloquence at my command I launched into a defense of the woman, and all her unfortunate sisters. Leading on from this I told a lot of instances where women had been wrongfully judged and their lives ruined everlastingly just through circumstantial evidence.

“‘I knew a case once,’ I said, ‘where a man and his wife were separated by some little thing, and it was wrecking both their lives,—just breaking their hearts! And the whole thing was only a misunderstanding. The young wife was full of life and natural animal spirits, and in a spirit of dare-deviltry was a party in some foolish escapade with several others,—who were smooth enough to lie out of it,—which looked bad for her and one man in

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a manner that would have hopelessly compromised her in the eyes of the world had not her husband straightened the whole thing out and turned it into a joke, to the entire satisfaction of every one—excepting himself. He believed she had lied to him. He left her like one insane, rushing off to the far ends of the earth without ever giving any one a chance to help clear up the trouble, not even his mother. Jest see the misery his rashness and blind pride caused, both to himself and his poor little wife. *And she had told him the truth.*’

“By the time I had got this far, Tom had bolted for the door, and he did not come back until after every one was abed and asleep. I had no way of knowing whether he had taken anything I said to himself or not; but I knew it had at least stirred things up and maybe set him thinking,—and that was a whole lot. That is, if it had started him on a different tack than he had been on these many months. How I hoped and prayed the unhappy fellow would jest let down the bars long enough for me to reach him in some way.

“One day as I sat reading a Spokane paper, I ran across something that brought the tears to my old eyes,—and it gave me a thought.

“You know on the editorial page of the Spokane Chronicle, there is a column headed ‘Old Favorites,’ and under it they re-print old poems. What I had come across was a poem by Bob Burdette that would have softened a heart of stone it seemed to me,—it was so sweet and touching.

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“I folded the paper so that page was uppermost and with a devout prayer, laid it where I knew Tom would pick it up as soon as he came in. Well, he did that very thing. I sat like one froze to the chair as I watched his eye light on this very poem, then follow it down line after line. It was entitled ‘Alone,’ and this is how it goes—for I know it by heart:

“I miss you, my darling, my darling;
The embers burn low on the hearth,
And hushed is the stir of the household,
And still the voice of its mirth.
Rain splashes fast on the terrace,
The winds past the lattices moan,
The midnight bell rings in the darkness,
And I am alone.

“I want you, my darling, my darling;
I am tired with care and with fret,
I would nestle in silence beside you,
And all but your presence forget
In the hush of the happiness given
To those who through trusting have grown
To the fulness of love and contentment;
But I am alone.

“I call you, my darling, my darling;
My voice echoes back on my heart,
I stretch my arms to you in longing,
And lo! they fall empty apart.
I whisper sweet words, you taught me,
The words we only have known,
Till the blank of the dumb air is bitter,
And I am alone.

“I pray for you darling, my darling;
With its yearning my very heart aches,
And the load that divides us weighs harder,
I shrink from the jar it makes.
Old sorrows rise up to beset me,
Old doubts make my spirit their own;
Oh, come through the darkness and save me,
For I am alone! Alone!”

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"It must have been the 'psychological moment', —for that poem went straight to the mark. I knew it by the way the muscles of his face twitched and his quick intake of breath at the finish, almost like a sob. My heart sent up a prayer of thankfulness when he caught up his hat and started out on one of his long walks. I knew I had won.

"When he came back I was prepared for his blunt statement that he was starting for the nearest station at once.

"He pressed my hand hard at parting,—merely saying he would write me soon. But I understood. And some way or other, he seemed to feel that I understood."

Again the old man seemed to drift off into his dream country where the pictures made soft, tender reflections in his kindly eyes, and I was to be forgotten for the time. Then turning as he had at the beginning of the story when he had uttered his belief in the divine spark in every man, he met my expression of unsatisfied interest and it brought him back to the present with an apologetic cough.

"Well, there isn't much more to tell." He looked over at me with his benevolent, kindly smile that had endeared him to me as much as the wholesome philosophy which it usually accompanied. "If my conscience ever had troubled me about the part I played, it was soon appeased. Here is one of many letters I have had from Tom Millard,—you may read it, but first, just look at this." And he drew from the envelope a postcard photograph and handed it to me. It was of a man and a baby of

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perhaps a year and a half, and beneath was written in a bold hand, "Tom, Jr., and Tom, Sr."

The picture alone would have put the right "finis" to the story; for if ever I saw happiness, I read it in the handsome, manly face in the picture, and coupled with it was the just pride in the sturdy little lad in his arms, a second edition of himself in miniature. After just hearing his story, is it any wonder I gazed with such interest at the pictured faces of the principal actors in what might have been such a tragedy but for the intervention of the noble old man at my side?

He handed me the letter received that day, and I read :

"Dear old friend:—I am sending you the latest of Tom, Jr., and his dad. The picture speaks for itself.

"Just a year ago today since I reached home; *home!* It seems ages ago, and yet but yesterday, that I stepped unannounced into the home picture of Edith,—my poor little girl-mother,—holding a cooing baby in her arms,—*my son!*—of whose existence I did not even know! O, the self reproach and misery that was mine!

"My pride—my foolish, crazy pride—broke then, and my heart with it, as I dropped to my knees beside my poor little girl, who had been left to pass through that soul testing battle,—for my sake,—*alone!* How I begged her to forgive me—yet I can never forgive myself!—as I took them both in my arms. And before I arose from my knees, I thanked

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God for the good friend out there in the far west
who had helped bring about this awakening of my
real self. If you never did another act of kindness
in your life, this one alone has earned you heaven.
God bless you!

“Your grateful friend,

TOM.”

“The Other Kind”

The short September day was near its close. Three-year old Milly was asleep on a roll of wraps at her mother's feet; but Johnnie and Helen and Arthur and Catherine were still trying to keep pace with their mother in pulling the hops from the pole-embracing vines, when a strange man came up to their box.

“My name is Brown,” he brusquely stated. “I am the owner of these hop-fields.” For awhile he watched the workers in silence, as if reluctant to carry out his purpose. “I have a message for you, madam,” he finally said. “I have been notified by the sheriff that I am violating the child-labor law by permitting children under twelve to pick hops, so I am obliged to tell you that your children will have to quit.”

For a moment Mrs. Brewster was stunned. During the whole summer her children had earned enough in the berry fields to pay the family expenses thus enabling her to save her earnings for the time, near at hand, when she would be the only bread-winner. The few weeks remaining of hop-picking would not amount to much, but the future without the help of the busy little hands looked very dark indeed. “It's pretty hard,” she said, “when a mother has to do it all.”

“Are you a widow?” asked the man, softened by the plaintive answer.

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“No,” Mrs. Brewster faltered, “but I am all alone for the present,—my husband went away a year ago to find steady employment—and I don’t know when he’ll return.”

“Oh, I see,” replied Mr. Brown. “Well, we passed the mother’s aid law for just such women as you. Why don’t you apply for a pension with provision for these children?”

Mrs. Brewster gave an upward toss of her head. “I am not one of that kind!” she flared. “I neither accept charity nor allow my children to do so! However hard they work and whatever privation they suffer, they shall not be cheated out of their birthright of independence as long as I have the power to prevent it.”

“That’s just my style,” applauded Mr. Brown. “It’s the good old-fashioned spirit that turned out men and women of backbone instead of the weak-kneed, spineless specimens of these days. Why, if things go on as they are it won’t be long before one-half of the people will be supporting the other half.”

Mrs. Brewster had not stopped working, and the children, with the thoroughness of an army of caterpillars, had stripped their side of the pole while she cleaned off hers. “Huh, this ain’t work!” put in laughing-eyed Johnnie. “It’s fun to earn your own sweaters and things. When I go back to school,” he added with a glance at his patched rags, “I’ll have everything new.”

“Your kids don’t seem to be suffering from over-work,” grinned Mr. Brown, “they’re as sunny and sassy as so many dandelions.”

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"That's just what I want them to be," laughed the mother—"and not only as sunny and 'sassy,' but as vigorous and pushing and clean,—and as independent, too!"

"S'pose *you'll* go on picking? the man inquired as he turned to go.

"No, I couldn't do more than earn our expenses, working alone," was the regretful reply, "so we may as well go home."

Before noon the next day, Mrs. Brewster with her bunch of "dandelions," was in the city—all elated to the lightness of the airy balloons of their prototypes at being even so insignificant a part of splendid Seattle. As they approached their own three-room dwelling in the outskirts, so homelike in its envelope of vines,—the recreant father had not left them homeless,—Johnnie ran ahead. "Hello, a letter!" he cried as he opened the door. "Guess it's from Papa!"

Mrs. Brewster coming up and hearing the word, "papa," snatched the letter, her face alight with expectation. "Huh, nothing but a city notice!" she sighed. "Hope it's not another assessment. But that's just what it is," she declared, after a glance at the brief contents. "Twelve dollars on that boulevard twenty blocks away that we shall never even see. It does seem as if the folks that ride in automobiles ought to pay for their own roads!"

"It looks as if we was handin' out charity to them," asserted Johnnie, "and I should think they'd be ashamed to take it!"

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“That’s so, my boy,” agreed the mother, recovering her spirit, “but I would far rather give than receive even if it does pinch us a little. The satisfaction of living without charitable aid is life-long, while the miseries of want are only for the time being. But I hope Papa will come home before this assessment is due,” she smiled.

Then the routine for the winter began. Milly was sent to a neighbor’s while the other four were in school, and Mrs. Brewster toiled in a laundry, wondering and worrying about what the “kiddies” were doing all day without her care. The home washing and sewing she did at night, leaving the children to manage the rest.

“We’re getting along famously,” she declared one day, as the united family were eating their supper of pea-soup and corn-bread. “If this keeps up we may be able to afford a visit from Santa Claus; the old fellow isn’t very fond of poor folks, you know.”

“Is us poor folks, mamma?” asked Catherine in dismay.

Mrs. Brewster thought a moment. “Well, no,” she soothingly replied, “we’re rich enough in everything but money.”

That very night a part of their riches took flight. Milly came down with the measles. Of course it ran through the family and when quarantine was raised, the devoted mother became ill. Too weak to rise, she lay on her hard bed and sighed her heart out with the deadly fear of having to ask for aid. “I’d rather see my children dead than eating the bread of paupers,” was the goading reflection, that

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like some disease-repressing medicament, reduced her almost to the verge of the grave before its tonic effects began to be felt. But at last the children laughed again to see her about the house.

The day before Christmas, propped up in a chair, she was making a necktie for Johnnie's present, when her proud independence was put to the severest test. An automobile stopped before the house. All the children but Milly were at a neighboring playground, so Mrs. Brewster tottered to the door. A glance through the glass panel told her what was coming. A large auto-dray, loaded to its capacity, stood at the curb, and two men with arms filled to overflowing were already on the porch.

“Some one has reported that we are destitute,” was the thought that burned through her mind, “and we are not. We still have food and fuel!” Her face was no longer pale when she opened the door. “There has been some mistake,” she said to the foremost lieutenant of charity.

“I have your name and address, madam,” was the firm reply. “There can't be any mistake.”

“Well, I ought to know,” flared the resolute woman. “I never sent my name to your paper and no one else had a right to!”

“You may as well have the things, anyway,” smiled the man.

Mrs. Brewster thought of the bare cupboard and the tiny heap of coal in the bin,—and wavered. But it was only for an instant. “You'll have plenty of use for them,” she said, and quickly closed the door, shutting out her part of the bounty that a sympa-

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thetic newspaper had collected from a generous public to relieve the city's destitute. “God forgive me if I have done wrong!” she silently prayed, as she led Milly back to hover over the stove.

The next morning dawned sunny and mild, and laughter and shouts of “Merry Christmas!” rang as merrily through the Brewster household as through a palace. The mother's poor little presents had been joyously received and the children were decking themselves in their made-over finery, when a heavy step was heard outside. Fearful that it might be another emissary of charity, Mrs. Brewster started to turn him away, but was too slow. The door was pushed open and the visitor burst into the room. “Hello! Merry Christmas!” he shouted.

“It's Santa Taus!” crowed Milly, seeing only the arms and pockets filled with mysterious packages and not recognizing her father so opportunely returned.

“We're all right, now,” shouted the man as soon as the jubilee was over. “I've got a steady job on a big farm and a shack to live in and—”

“That's glorious, Jack,” cried the wife, too delighted to wait for all the good news. “We won't mind the hardest work—if only we can always save our self-respect! We're not the ‘charity’ kind!”

Reconciled

Florence Crichton, when a mere child, used to watch from her home on a hill, the entrance of vessels to the harbor of Seattle, and she claimed the finest of them and the harbor itself as her own.

With the coming of the automobile and the growth of the city, boulevards were built to one place and then to another. She grew with their growth, and from playing the game of appropriating all the beautiful things she saw, she came to live the game. The first time her father took her out on the boulevard overlooking Lake Washington, she claimed the lake, twenty-five miles long, as her own. And as they followed the drive into the deep green woods, across bridges that spanned tiny brooklets and great ravines and then swung out again into the open, the great stretch of water below them—with its background of fir trees, and beyond, the glorious Cascade Mountains, all seemed to her a picture arranged for the sole purpose of completing the joy of that wonderful drive.

The summer she finished her junior year at the University, a fine road to Mount Rainier was completed, and she was included in the first party to drive over it. As the party left their machines and climbed to a pinnacle nearby, she claimed, in her accustomed manner, the mountain as her own, and loved it.

Reconciled

An untried optimist, she responded with love to the native beauties of her birthplace, as simply and naturally as a bird greets with song the dawn of day in the spring time.

And as she stood on this pinnacle, drinking in the beauties of the surrounding valleys, it seemed quite fitting that Harold Comer should declare his love and ask her to become his wife. There on the mountain top she made her vows of love, and as she descended the mountain, hand in hand with her lover, the old, old story, ever new, glorified her face as in all time it has glorified the face of maiden.

A year later, preparations for the wedding began. Florence's life, thus far, had been one long dream of delight. She had walked in perpetual sunshine, a sunshine of love and happy dreams. But one week before the day set for the wedding her first cloud appeared suddenly, out of a clear sky. And swiftly the tempest followed.

For the first time, illness assailed her. After a few days of agonized suspense, and anxious weeks of slow recovery, a consultation resulted in the announcement that she would soon be all right with the exception of her right arm,—it was paralyzed.

This, her first trial, the first test of her strength was met, by this erstwhile optimist, with blank despair.

And when Harold, overjoyed with her recovery, hurried to her exclaiming, "We'll be so happy, Little Sweetheart! We shall not mind this small affliction," her studied haughtiness was pathetic.

Reconciled

“Is it then so small a matter that the best medical authority in the country has pronounced me a life-long cripple?” she questioned.

“But oh, my Princess,” he laughed. “It will be my privilege to serve—”

She interrupted him with another attempt at haughtiness. “Do you think then, that I am the kind of girl to burden the man I love, and spoil his career with the care of a crippled wife? Oh, can you not see that everything is changed? We had made such beautiful plans, and now, look at this.”

She tragically lifted with the fingers of the left hand, the poor limp member which hung helpless whichever way she turned it.

“And more than this.” She stopped him with a gesture when he would have spoken. “Perhaps you can not understand, but two months ago this was all mine.” And she made an eloquent gesture toward the panorama seen from the window. “Look at the tints on the water, and on the Olympics, behind which the sun has just disappeared. And look at Mount Rainier. Oh, Harold, it rained last night and the air is as clear as it was in June. Then this picture was all mine. I lived in it and loved it. Every breath of mine was a response to the beauty and joy of it.

“But now, I look at my beautiful landscape and it mocks me. The sunlight dances gaily on the water, and Rainier, my mountain, my beloved mountain cries, ‘Aha! I am yours no more.’ The whole picture just screams at me, ‘You are finished. We

Reconciled

care nothing for your misery! We are just as beautiful—just as complete without your joy.' ”

“Oh yes,” she continued rapidly, fearing an interruption, “my career was a happy one while it lasted. But 'tis ended and in going down I shall not take you with me. No half-way measures are possible. I can not see you again.”

Again he would have spoken but she stopped him and continued, “I am going to ask my father to let me go away for a while until I get used to this, and learn to live this other life. Meantime I beg of you not to try to see me. Go and leave me now.”

He kissed the top of the bowed head and laid his cheek against it. “My poor little sweetheart,” he said. “Such foolish sick fancies are not like you.”

But she shrank from him, pleading: “Don’t, don’t make it any harder. I can not bear it.”

With another soft kiss on her hair, and a gentle pat, he assured her, “Yes Dearie, I will go. You are all wrong. I shall not argue now, but I know your love is not going to change for a foolish whim. You will soon be yourself again and all will be well.”

And he departed, not doubting that she would feel differently very soon. But despite the pleadings of her family, she would not see him again, nor open his letters. And at last they yielded to her persuasion to let her go to New York.

It was three years later when she returned, with the bitterness in her heart grown still more bitter. She had cemented with self-pity the wall of unhap-

Reconciled

piness about her. Suffering had clouded her eyes, and hardened the soft curves of her lips.

The week following her return, her dearest friend was to marry Harold's brother. She refused to act as bridesmaid,—Harold was to be best man,—but she could not refuse to attend the wedding. She greeted Harold coldly, but could not hide from him the signs of her misery.

As her family and friends were all in league against her, it was perhaps not entirely accidental that during the evening she found herself alone with Harold on the veranda overlooking Lake Washington. Fortune smiled upon Harold as he stepped to her side. For at that moment the moon peeped from behind a cloud, and bathed the lake, the mountain and woods in its glorious light. Retreat was impossible, so for a moment she stood, staring into eyes filled with the old-time love. Then she looked out over the lake, the glory of the moonlight upon it seeming from this distance to be something almost spiritual in its beauty.

For a long time they stood thus, the silence between them tense, while the bitterness, false pride and wretchedness in her heart struggled desperately against the melting warmth of love, an unnamed gladness and the scenes so welcome to her homesick heart.

At last he spoke gently, and as if continuing their conversation of three years past. "Yes, this and the view from your father's windows were yours. In the goodness of your heart you loved the pictures and did homage to the Maker. But, for-

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give me if I seem brutal, with your first misfortune you forsook your better self, your love and your homage. And, must I say it?—you deserted me because of your wounded pride."

Again the silence was tense. Again he spoke, and his voice rang with love and pain. "Florence my love, you can not remain false to both of us."

Once more there was a moment's silence, and then "Yes, false to both," she repeated. "That is it." And she turned to him a face radiant with joy. "Look at this," and again she made an eloquent, sweeping gesture. "I know now that I was wrong. God's world was calling me to live life bravely and to know myself. And I was afraid. I could not understand.

"But now, with the homesickness gone, and all this loved scene before me, and—the wedding—and all—and—you—so—near, my panic and blindness have gone like magic. I know now that I shall never again be afraid of life. Oh I feel again the old throb of life and joy. Harold—"

But Harold was staring—amazed. And following his gaze, she too stared. They were looking at her right hand, which unconsciously she had lifted high in air, this time without the aid of strong fingers.

“Rock of Ages”

Mary Ann Baggs was in front of the cabin cleaning two guns. Joash had planned to clean them that morning, but a summons to court had come the evening before, and he was off in his boat to the main-land, on an unexpected trip, so Mary Ann had promised to clean the guns. They said on Vashon that Mary Ann was “mighty handy;” she could row, fish, and hunt as well as any man on the island, and she kept her cabin neat and her children clean.

She was a strong, capable woman. Her old sunbonnet was pushed back on her head, and her dark hair and bright eyes added to her interesting personality.

The winter before a revival had been held in the little school-house. Mary Ann had come under conviction and got religion. It was the real thing with her. She had a Bible and she read it; and had taught her children the ten commandments and the Lord’s Prayer.

This morning as she worked she was humming to herself “Rock of Ages,” and thinking of the sermon of the previous Sabbath. The text had been “Deliver us from evil.” As she sang and worked her eyes wandered often to the waters of the sound rippling in the morning sunshine. The tide was in and the waves lapped gently against the jagged

“Rock of Ages”

rocks that rose as a natural barrier about the open space in front of the cabin.

Back of the cabin stretched the great forest of tall Washington pines and firs; the voices of the children came from the edge of it where they were playing.

Plenty of tradition hung over the lonely spot. The pioneers on the mainland still related tales of Indian orgies on the island, and of a certain cove called “Smugglers’ Cove.” Even now the peaceful atmosphere was threatened. For months past a band of lawless men had been operating along the coast, committing robberies and depredations, with the island as their rendezvous. Recently the island itself had been the scene of a dastardly deed. Not half a mile from where Mary Ann stood was the deserted cabin of old man Lumley. He was known to have money and had been robbed and murdered by members of the band. Clint Boyd, the leader, had been caught and jailed. His examination was now in progress. Joash had gone as a witness for the prosecution. Meanwhile the rest of the band were still at large, threatening vengeance. A rumor had come that some of them had been seen a mile or two away.

Mary Ann was a strong advocate of peace at all times; but Joash believed that “forewarned is fore-armed.”

The sun rose higher; the guns were about finished; the children had come from play and were watching their mother.

“Rock of Ages”

A man on horseback came suddenly round the bend in the narrow roadway leading up from the shore. He was followed by another; and at once two more came into view. Mary Ann gave one look. “The Boyd gang, sure enough!” she said under her breath, “but Joash isn’t here. Praise the Lord!” Then her thoughts turned to the old wallet behind the loosened bricks of the chimney. It contained their savings to buy the bit of cleared land adjacent to their own holding. Outwardly she was calm. She picked up the guns and with Seth and Hetty close at her heels, walked to the little verandah in front of the cabin.

The men dismounted, tied their horses to the fence, and entered the yard. The foremost, evidently the leader, came rapidly towards the steps. He wore brown corduroy trousers and a black shirt. His trousers were tucked into high boots in typical western fashion; on his head was a slouch hat. His face was dark and determined.

Mary Ann placed the guns against the side of the house and turned to greet him.

“Somethin’ to eat and that mighty quick, woman; set out some bread and bacon and make the coffee strong; now get a gait on ye. We’re hungry men and no time to fool. Must be out o’ here in twenty minutes.” Without replying, Mary Ann disappeared into the cabin, quickly prepared the food, set it forth on the deal table, and called the men. They filed in, a ruffianly-looking lot.

As they sat down, Mary Ann, standing at the head of the table, said quietly: “Gentlemen, we

“Rock of Ages”

allus have the blessin' before we eat," then she folded her toil-worn hands, closed her eyes, and in a solemn voice began the Lord's prayer. Hetty and Seth stood on either side of their mother, and from force of habit mingled their childish voices with hers.

“Cut it out,” began one of the men, but stopped at a look from the leader.

The petition finished, the men in awed silence ate rapidly and voraciously. Again and again Mary Ann filled up their plates. Suddenly the leader exclaimed: “Time's up, boys,” and they rose from the table. Mary Ann's heart stood still.

The leader turned towards her. “I want ye to know that we ain't much on religion, but we do know a brave woman when we see one. It ain't in our minds to harm ye or the young 'uns, and we are obligeed for the provisions.”

With these words he strode through the door and down the path. He was followed by the other men and they mounted and rode away.

Mary Ann stood for a few moments in silence looking down the way they had taken. Then she brought the guns in, put them in their places in the rack near the ceiling and went about her work. As she worked, she sang, softly,

“Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee.”

Deserted

“What is that you say, Betty?”

“The railroad is coming,” exclaimed Betty. “Jack just returned from The Dalles. He was talking with the men. They are building rapidly this way. Now if they buy your land, father, for the depot site and pay for the right of way through here, our fortunes will be made.”

The old man shook his head and said, “Yes, if they will. We have waited for so long, Betty, I have lost faith in that Northern Pacific Railroad Company. Your mother was just a slip of a girl, not as old as you are, when we filed on our homestead, and here we have lived and waited for the railroad all these years. How many loads I have hauled to The Dalles and back again in that time! I do hope I’ve hauled my last one.”

The old man walked to the end of the porch and shading his eyes with his hand stood looking toward the Old Town gap. “There is no other way to get through the foothills except through that gap, its got to go through my land! “I don’t mind for myself, I have gotten used to it. But if mother’s hopes could be realized,” he mused. “If Ben could finish his college course and she could go back to see him get his sheepskin. Bless her, she has never been back to her old home since we left on our honey-moon trip to take a homestead in Washington

Deserted

Territory. What a brave little girl she has been," thought the old man.

Spring had come very early that year, in fact there had been very little winter weather and now the garden was filled with blooming flowers. A long row of hollyhocks stood guard between the flowers and the vegetable garden. Back of the vegetable garden a row of tall trees made a wind-break, from which the breezes wafted the sweet odor of the balm buds. Clover in blossom along the irrigating ditches filled the air with its fragrance. The little town on the river was filled with blossoms, both wild and cultivated, for these old settlers were lovers of beauty and had taken time to grow flowers and vines in profusion. Every house was covered with climbing roses, and although there were few tea roses and bulbs, there were all the old-fashioned flowers and some of the newest and latest things from the East.

Betty ran back to her own home across the street and the pioneer went into the house to talk it all over with his wife.

As she had just finished her work for the day, they walked out into the garden, talking of the prosperity that would come with the railroad. As they passed the bed of white daisies, she stooped and gathered a handful and said, "Ben, can't you see little Margaret sitting there in the grass making her daisy chain? Its twenty-five years since we laid her away, and I never see those daisies without seeing her."

Deserted

“Yes,” said the father, “she looked just like you, blue eyes and golden hair. I can’t get over wishing we could have kept her.”

They walked on to the honeysuckle arbor and set talking of their young life together. “Here, Jack courted Betty. How happy they have been. And over there under the sunflowers little Ben had his garden,” said his mother.

They watched the setting sun paint the dull gray foothills gorgeous red and gold and then drop down behind the mountains.

What dreams filled the mother’s mind as she slipped away in slumber that night, dreams of seeing her son graduate from the State University where she had attended school, and where her old school-mate’s son was studying now.

What a beautiful world it was to her that night as she planned her trip and visit with the old friends of her girlhood days.

“I told you so, Benjamin, ‘All things come to him who waits.’ ”

“Yes, if you wait long enough,” said the old man.

The weeks flew by on wings of hope. The whole village was in a flutter of excitement. The railroad official had been there the day before trying to make a deal for the depot site, but as corporations have no souls, the fact of the destiny of many lives had no weight.

The official wrote hurriedly in his notebook, “Old Yakima depot site too high priced,” and ordered the engineers to go on four miles north of the old

Deserted

Yakima site and lay out a new town in the sage brush.

The old settlers called a meeting in the church. What did this mean? How could the railroad pass through the town and not have a depot?

The mystery was explained by a railroad official who came in a few weeks and announced that the company was ready to move every house off its foundation up to a new lot in the new town of North Yakima, which the railroad company had laid out.

The women huddled together with tears in their eyes. "Must we leave our flowers, our lawns, our shade trees and our berries and fruit and go up there to live in the sage brush? Not a blade of green grass, nothing to be seen but sand and sage brush for miles around!"

The younger men said, "We have no choice, the railroad will make the new town and kill the old one."

New comers were already arriving at the new town site. Lots were selling rapidly. There was no time to stop and grieve. In a few days only a half dozen houses were left standing. A few of the old settlers would not move and were left to tell the tale, among them Benjamin Brown and his wife.

The old pioneer said, "Jack, you and Betty go, you are young and can make a home in the new town, but mother and I will stay on the old place. You will want a cool, shady place to spend your

Deserted

Sundays; so we will stay here. A railroad surely is a great thing when it can make or unmake a town in a day. Well! one generation must live for the next. Our children will all be rich some day."

His prophecy did come true, for Jack opened a real estate office in the new town and could hardly handle the business. The new town was wild with excitement. Sales were frequent, with the same lots being turned over two or three times, each time at a big increase.

Many men had come through from the East with the first train, eager to take up homestead claims: Shacks sprang up like mushrooms in the night. Lumber was scarce, but tent houses with board floors were put up by the hundreds. Fortunes were made in a day and the new town conquered the desert and caused it "to blossom as the rose."

Young Ben Brown came back West without his diploma and was elected mayor of the new town of North Yakima. "I don't see," said his proud father, "but Ben gets along all right without his diploma."

"Well," said the mother, "he might have been president of the United States some day, if he could have graduated with his class."

In the old town, the yards and gardens filled the air with their sweetness, but the blossoms were left to fade alone, deserted. The birds taught their young to fly unmolested by the small boy. Only a

Deserted

few old couples sat on their porches in the evening. They looked longingly toward the North Gap where their children had gone to build a new city in the desert.

The New Word

“There’s an exquisite suggestion!”

The exclamation fell from the lips of a passenger on the slowly moving train. Instantly the man’s face had undergone a transformation. The deep, gray-blue eyes flashed with pleasure, and the corners of the tightly-closed mouth softened into something that hinted of delight.

Pillowing both elbows upon his knees, he concentrated his attention upon his magazine. Almost audibly he read again: “There is an old legend that runs something like this. On the day when the Christ toiled on that upward path, with heart palpitating and muscles straining under His burden, when it seemed He could go no farther, out from the shadow stepped the sweet Saint Veronica. Tenderly, with upturned face, and with lips murmuring a prayer, she drew from her girdle a handkerchief, and gently and lovingly wiped the damp brow of her Master. And,—the legend has it—when she held up the square of linen, all about her were amazed and awed to see implanted there a perfect likeness of the Savior’s face.”

The traveler ceased to read, but he did not move. Nor did he arouse from his reverie until someone

The New Word

near him uttered a low cry of wonder. Then he turned to the window.

The Northern Pacific train was threading its way over the Cascade Divide, and they were passing through a fairyland of sunlight, of mountain tops aglint with blinding brightness and of huge fir trees shouldering, with never a swerve, their burden of ice jewels. The light that shone upon the eager young face as he read the legend, was intensified by a reflection there of the dazzling beauty without. The Greatest of Magicians had surely been at work. The man drew a deep breath that was full of the spice that only the pine mountains know. He shaded his eyes with his hand as he smiled out upon the glory of the morning.

But the train was beginning to descend now, and what was that just below them? No—but, yes, it must be a cloud, for they were already in the midst of it. Suddenly drops of rain beat hard and fast upon the window pane. The train sped on swiftly through a thick fog to the Sound city.

The smile vanished slowly and gradually a frown replaced it. After thrusting his note-book impatiently into his pocket, the man opened the bag at his feet and took from it a roll of type-written pages. He glanced at them and then crammed them back into the valise like so much waste paper.

It was sometime before he settled himself in a restful attitude. Then he relaxed and mused of his journey's end, where he expected to find the girl of his dreams. Soon something conjured up before

The New Word

him the picture of a girl and boy walking home together from the rural school "in those dear old golden rule days, when she was his queen in calico, and he was her bashful, bare-foot beau." He saw them later in Broadway High School in Seattle. And still again his mind's eye viewed them walking slowly across the Washington University Campus. He had completed his journalistic course, and was telling her, his under classmate by two years, good-bye. The sweet eyes were full of proud tears, for she had foreseen great things ahead for him.

Nearly two years had elapsed since he had seen the girl and he felt that he could wait no longer. But what was he taking her? Had he "won his joust"? Was he ready to go to her and ask for that wonderful thing that he knew was his? Could he face her with a traveling bag full of manuscript worn with marks of their many journeys? A positive shrug of the broad shoulders was answer enough. On the mountain summit he had been tremendously uplifted, first by the startling beauty of the old legend, and again by the sunlight wealth of the Divide. But they dropped from the summit and the sunshine, and grasp at it as he would, the vision slipped away and failed to gild for him the fog and the rain. He knew that he possessed real ability to write. He knew as well that something was lacking, but what it was—

"Is John Gregory in this car?" The words were thundered by the conductor. Our friend nodded in

recognition and received the yellow envelope. His blanched face soon told the story. He could not proceed on his journey to the girl.

At Auburn a tall, stalwart figure swung off the step before the car stopped and took the first train back to his boy-hood home among the hills. He found the brave little mother very near death but she had waited for her boy. Never could he forget the long night when his lips endeavored in vain to frame a prayer out of the depths of his anguish. Forever would ring in his memory her last words of faith and confidence in him. "I count on you, my son, to fill your measure of a man's work to overflowing. And when you come to the dark places, I shall be there too, and my arms shall enfold you, and when you come to the high places, there I shall be too with my hand in yours." And then—she smiled—and through Eternity would linger with him the wonder of it.

The next day he made a path to the woods, far out to the hills. He loved the companionship of the lone bird's call and the wind in the trees. Before many days the spirit of the woods lured him as in his boyhood, until by and by it seemed that a silent messenger dwelt in those bleak places and brought him peace.

Then before he knew it, spring came along. Ever since his mother's death, he had been working with nervous determination upon a new book. He traced his first inspiration for the story back to the legend he had read that morning on the mountain summit.

The New Word

But it was the mother's smile that had led him on, and on, until his subject had gripped him with a feverish energy, and now the book was well under way.

One May morning he followed his path to the woods. The south wind caressed the crisp, wavy hair, and kissed away the last line of pain from the youthful face. All about him there gleamed and sang a symphony of glory and life and gladness. And rising out of it all, he seemed to see the radiant face of the Resurrection Angel walking toward him in shining garments and with outstretched hands. John Gregory bowed his head.

But what fragrance was that wafted to him across the violets? It must be from that wondrous burst of bloom but a few feet away. Could it be, yes, it was the very shrub that a few weeks ago had seemed absolutely dead. In fact he had doubted greatly that it would ever live again. He laughed aloud as he touched the exquisite thing to make sure it was real. The pine tops forgot their dignity and bent and swayed to the rhythm of a joyous spring-song, and it was echoed among the swelling rhododendron buds and the leaves on the ash trees.

The boughs of the oak whispered to him of courage and strength, and told him a wonderful secret, that at that very moment hundreds of dead-appearing acorns were sprouting with the faith that they too would become mighty oaks. The clear call of a lark sounded and he reached up both arms as he moved toward it. Happy as a child was John Gregory as he darted from this to that new delight.

The New Word

He was relearning the secrets of root and mold and leaf and flower and bird. Flashes and glimmerings of a new understanding lifted and buoyed him with a strange consciousness. He saw and loved life this morning as never before.

But what was that gleam of color yonder? Ah, —the first wild Iris! How often he and the girl had gathered them near this same stream! How well he recalled her childish delight when long ago in this very spot he had told her what Ruskin said of the Fleur-de-lis, that it was the Flower of Chivalry “with a sword for its leaf and a lily for its heart.” He smiled tenderly as he remembered how their young hearts had thrilled as they vied in rehearsing for each other the stories of those brave, pure-hearted knights of old.

Hereafter this flower would be to him always a symbol of hope and faith. It should stand for all that he had learned today. There was a mist in the man’s eyes as he gathered an armful of the glorious blue. Reluctantly he turned toward home, but he carried with him hidden among the blossoms something more priceless than gold.

It was Commencement week at the University. The girl was hastening across the campus. Her day had been full of pleasure and triumph, and tomorrow—she walked more slowly now, and a wistful smile lurked about the sweet mouth,—she had so hoped—but a friend interrupted the reverie. “Oh, Ruth, a box has just been left for you. Do hurry and open it now!”

The New Word

A moment later the girl lifted from the box an immense bunch of magically hued Iris. When she was alone she opened the note that she had seen peeping from the mass of blue. It contained only, "I'll call for you at six—John."

Long had they sat there beside the friendly rhododendrons. Soft for an hour had come the lapping of near-by waves, mingled with the whisperings among the alders. At last with luminous faces they sought the beckoning water.

The lowering sun had charmed upon the restless waves of Puget Sound a long, narrow line of wonderful color. The air was very clear and the distant Olympic summits glowed with the rose light of the Infinite.

John turned to Ruth. That which had gleamed at him from the upturned face of the legendary saint, that which his mother's smile had breathed into real life, and which had been fostered by the wild Iris and the larks and the pine-tops, was now clarified and consummated in the girlish figure beside him. He could scarcely wait to finish the last chapter of his book.

He drew the girl close until he breathed the fragrance of the blue flower in her gown. Together they gazed out over the wild tossing Sound waters toward where they knew there was the mighty calmness of the Pacific beyond, and then—out of the strugglings of the man's soul was born a mighty sense of peace. He felt the glad, promised pressure of that dear unseen hand, and then he knew

The New Word

that he had sought out one of the highest of the high places.

He seemed to see a word emblazoned in shining letters of gold against the jagged, magic-hued peaks of the Olympics; he seemed to hear falling softly from unseen lips, as in a benediction, that new word, Service.

Tod's "Santy"

The "special" had come and gone, and the local train, "The Owl," that had been sidetracked for twenty minutes, switched to the main line.

Tod was behind the big sign by the water tank. A little distance away on the end of a log, a brown object had just appeared; sitting erect on its hind-legs, it began to industriously manipulate its front paws. Tod, oblivious to all else, watched it, fascinated. All at once, he started towards the log. The brown object pricked up its ears, jumped off, and disappeared into the ground right before Tod's astonished eyes. "It's sure a Jackie wabbit! A Jackie wabbit!" he shouted and ran to tell Uncle Nate and Rod, or anyone of the wonderful happening. He emerged from behind the sign and looked—and looked again. Nothing in sight near him save the tank, the tall Washington firs and pines and the little spring. In the distance, rounding the curve and speeding away from him was the local. On it were mother, Uncle Nate, and Rod, his twin brother.

Tod stared for a moment, then he began to howl. The jack-rabbit had come out of its hole, and heard with amazement the unusual sound. As the train entirely disappeared from view, Tod ran down the track after it as fast as his short, fat legs could carry him. Suddenly he stopped, overcome by a

Tod's "Santy"

sense of desolation. It was a lonely spot, the narrow entrance to the valley; the lofty range of the Cascades rose on either hand, and the big trees grew down close to the track save where a little clearing had been made near the spring and the tank. It was the only stop in the long stretch between the big lumber camp and the valley town thirty miles away.

Finally Tod turned and trotted slowly back to the tank. All about him was silence and the great trees; the rabbit had disappeared again. Near the tank, stood the big new sign. It advertised the fact that the Valley Mercantile Company was "Headquarters for Santa Claus." A generous supply of red paint had been used to portray the old fellow himself, lifesize, with his pack on his back.

Tod looked up at the big, red Santa Claus, and a feeling of comfort stole into his little heart. "Santy is coming tonight; on the train and everywhere; mother said so. He will find me. He surely will!" The ruddy face of Santy seemed to smile upon him, and he thought there was a twinkle in his eye. At length, overcome by exhaustion, he crouched down in front of the sign, close to Santy's feet and fell asleep.

The December sun had dropped out of sight behind the mountains—the wind was rising and moaning among the tops of the pines. Snow had begun to fall in large flakes, few and far apart.

A horseman riding slowly down the trail stopped at a bend in the path and looked cautiously up and

Tod's "Santy"

down the track. "Coast is clear," he said aloud, "nothing due now until ten o'clock tommorrer. Tom said as how he would cache the provisions in that clump of trees, same as t'other time. I'll get 'em and be making tracks back afore it gets too dark. Looks like we're in for a big storm. I shan't object." He rode across the track, straight up to a clump of cedars on the opposite side. Dismounting, he pushed away a big stone lying there, and a hole in the ground was revealed. He reached in, and pulled out a canvas sack.

"Bacon and meal, I judge, and coffee an terbacker from the smell. Good for you, old Pard, you allus know what a feller wants." He rolled the stone into place, fastened the sack to the animal's neck, and mounted again.

When he reached the track, he turned and rode towards the spring. "Might as well give the cayuse a drink. Blamed if the Valley Mercantile Company hasn't put up a new piece of architecture since I was here afore. 'Headquarters for Santa Claus,' and old Nick himself! Big head for business someone must have; something red on the ground there. It's safe to investigate, I reckon."

He rode nearer, and looked down on Tod in his red sweater, curled up against the sign, fast asleep, two tears still visible on his freckled cheeks.

"The little vagabond! what in the name of King-dom Come is he doin' here? Must have got left somehow. Sorry we can't turn into a rescuin' party, but circumstances are plumb agin it." He watered his horse and came back to the sign. "Hate to leave

Tod's "Santy"

the little chap, but it's too risky." He looked anxiously around; night was coming on and the snow was falling fast. His cap and old mackinaw were already white.

The child stirred uneasily and opened his eyes. The man stooped over him. "I fought you'd come, Santy," murmured Tod sleepily, "Did you bring the reindeer?" "You bet," replied "Santy," "the whole six on 'em." "But my name's Jake," he muttered, too low for Tod to hear, and "I'm in for it now."

Holding the child half-stupefied with cold with one arm, with the other he guided the sturdy little cayuse up the trail. The wind was blowing straight from the canyon. Before they had gone a mile, a furious storm was raging. Horse and man fought their way in the teeth of a blizzard; steadily higher and higher they mounted to a little shack that faced the trail.

Jake carried the child in and laid him on the rude bunk built against the wall. Raking up the embers in the fire-place he piled on fuel until the whole room was lit by a cheerful glow; then he went outside, cared for the cayuse and brought in the sack of provisions.

Tod was awake and was sitting up in the bunk, looking around in bewilderment. Jake carried him to a seat in front of the fire and as he began to remove his shoes and sweater, Tod found his tongue. "Is this your house, Santy"? Then, all at once, he wailed, "I want my mother, an' I want Uncle Nate and Roddy."

Tod's "Santy"

"All right, all right, Kiddie, we'll find 'em termorror. The reindeers will be ready to take us to the ten o'clock, but we'll have to stay here tonight on account of the storm. It's too much for my reindeers, though they're pretty tough. Now you just sit and toast your toes, while I hustle around and get somethin' to eat."

Tod, warmed and fed, cuddled down in Jake's arms.

"You're a funny Santy," he said after awhile, "but I 'spose you're all right. I hope you brought my little auto,—I wrote you 'bout it, you know; you may give it to me now, if you want to."

"Better wait till tomorrer, kid," replied Jake, "you kin have this tonight," and he pulled out a battered watch.

Tod took it and was silent for a time, turning it over and over, in the firelight; then the torrent of questions broke forth again.

"Did you bring presents to the Babe of Bethlehem, Santy? when he was lying in the shed with the cows and sheep? It's his birthday tomorrow, mother said. I'm four years old, and I get presents on my birthday. Did you 'member Him when He was down here? I 'spose you've been alive ever since the Lord made little boys and girls, haven't you?" Suddenly he began to sing:

"While shepherds watched their flocks by night
A sitting on the ground."

"Mother sings that—I don't know but just those two lines."

Tod's "Santy"

The fire on the hearth burned low. Jake put Tod back in the bunk, and covered him carefully with his old coat. The child slept peacefully.

When morning broke, the blizzard had spent its force. The snow lay in huge drifts on the mountain sides. Above the cabin towered the snowy peaks of the Cascades bathed in the morning sunlight.

Very early, Jake with Tod in front, astride the cayuse, started down the trail. He knew full well the risk he ran in making the ten o'clock, but his promise to the child must be kept. There was no other way.

Sometimes they waded snowdrifts that came to the animal's neck; again the ground was bare, but covered with ice that made traveling difficult. Tod was happy and very sociable, but Jake grew very quiet as they drew near the track.

"There's the train," cried Tod as a shrill whistle was heard in the clear, still air, and the rumble of wheels reached their ears.

"And there's Uncle Nate," he added, as the train reached the tank and a well known form appeared on the platform.

"I'm here, Uncle Nate," he shouted. "I stayed all night with Santy. He's here too. I've had a splendid time. Looky! Looky." He held up the battered watch. "It's mine. Santy gave it to me."

The train stopped just long enough for Jake to place Tod in his uncle's arms. "Tell me your name and where to reach you," said Uncle Nate. Jake shook his head.

Tod's "Santy"

"Good-bye, Santy," piped a little voice. "You're sure I'll get the auto." "Sure, sure," answered Jake. "Good-bye, Kid."

As the train moved on, suddenly a shot rang out and several horsemen rode into view, coming down the opposite hill.

"We've got him all right," exclaimed Big Sam, the sheriff, as he saw Jake reel and fall. Dismounting, he ran to the side of the prostrate man. Jake opened his eyes, his dying glance fell on the sign, and a smile drifted across his lips. "Christmas, and the little tad took *me* for Santy."

Her Birthright

Louise Whitman paused in her dusting and studied thoughtfully the rugged western landscape framed by the window,—pines, cedars and tamarack in the foreground, volcanic rock in the middle distance, and far away against a cobalt sky, many purple mountains. She remembered how, when her eyes had first rested on the scene, she had thrilled at the prospect of reproducing it. Painting had always given her a peculiar joy. She responded with exalted emotion to any happy juxtaposition of colors about her, and the successful transferring to canvas of a mood of nature gave her acute pleasure.

Five years ago! And for nearly a year now she had not opened her paint box. Her baby, now three years old, had quite fully occupied her time, but she knew that he had not been the real obstacle. On the contrary, she saw that, other things being equal, he might have contributed to her inspiration. For the first year she had worked diligently and happily, although she found with keen disappointment that her husband took no interest whatever in her efforts. About the end of the year however, Paul's business affairs began to go badly, and at the same time his attitude towards her painting changed gradually from indulgent toleration to impatience and active hostility. Then the baby ar-

Her Birthright

rived, and for the next two years Louise was so completely occupied with the normal and satisfying cares of motherhood that the issue was lost sight of.

One bright May morning when the air was vibrating with sunshine, Louise tucked the baby into his go-cart, and taking her paintbox under her arm, started off for a nearby park intending to make a day of it. From the first however everything went wrong. The baby kept getting his fists into her paints; she found that two years of almost complete idleness had played havoc with her skill, and what divided attention she managed to give to her canvas produced only the most discouraging results. About the middle of the afternoon she gave up and returned to the house. Paul had arrived, driven home early it appeared by a headache, after an unlucky day in business. His mood had not been improved by half an hour in the empty house, and upon seeing the painting materials he gave vent to his ill-temper in a bitter denunciation of her passion for painting and her extravagance in indulging it. Louise was deeply hurt, but after considering the matter calmly she saw that the foundation of his complaint lay in money matters, and in order to make her avocation, at least, pay for itself if possible, she determined to make a few sketches and try to sell them. For the next few months she worked passionately and secretly; but although she was able to do two or three things which satisfied her moderately, she knew intuitively that they were too impressionistic for any general

Her Birthright

appreciation or market. Her pictures stood about in an art store gathering dust until she removed them in chagrin. After that she painted no more, and tried conscientiously to fill the void in her life with her domestic duties and her child.

Today as she looked out on the familiar scene it failed to stir her. Had she lost her responsiveness to the beautiful, she wondered? She finished her dusting and went out to the kitchen to prepare the lunch.

“Hello, Louise,” called Whitman as he entered the house that evening, “you’ll never guess who’s here!”

“Why, Harry Collins, of all people!” Louise exclaimed as she warmly grasped both hands of the unexpected guest.

Collins, whom both of them had known since childhood, had become the editor of one of Chicago’s great dailies. He had the alert, intelligent look of a man who is keenly alive in an interesting world.

During dinner the talk centered about old friends and doings “back east.” Collins showed himself to be an active participant in Chicago’s affairs. He spoke of politics and the Press Club, of the Thomas Orchestra and the Art Institute, in each of which he had a personal interest.

“Harry,” said Louise after a while, “it strikes me that your own development has been quite as surprising as Chicago’s. You used to be a very practical sort of boy. How do you happen to know so much about music and art?”

Her Birthright

“Well,” said Collins smiling, “I think this is the first time I was ever called on to defend myself on a charge of undue mentality, but if you must know, I think I’ll have to follow the example of Adam and throw the blame on a woman. The fact is that my wife has been educating me. Before I was married I used to think that the only suitable pleasures for a man were hunting, baseball and poker. My idea of absolutely nothing doing was Grand Opera or a picture gallery. My wife has taught me that the most satisfying pleasure in life comes through studying things. Take Art for instance. Four years ago I had never suspected that Art could be interesting to anybody but an artist, and I thought that artists were born, not made. Now it’s my favorite hobby, and in a small way I’m a collector. What started me was a little book my wife gave me on “How to look at pictures.” It was delightful. I followed it up with a course of lectures at the Institute, and I’ve been studying the subject ever since. I have an idea that almost any subject is interesting if you study it, and for a guide to the good things in life commend me to an intelligent and educated woman. What do you say, Whitman?”

“Well,” said Paul, “I subscribe to your sentiments about women. I did my part in putting through the suffrage bill. But as to the rest I have my doubts. I don’t know a thing about art myself, and I don’t believe there is any of it in me. It simply doesn’t interest me.”

Her Birthright

“It doesn’t interest you because you never gave it any of your august attention. You probably prefer billiards. We men are all alike, and we’re really an awful set of asses. Here, come in the parlor a minute,” he continued, “and I’ll prove to you that pictures are interesting. Here for instance is a sea-view. It isn’t bad, but it doesn’t compare with that little landscape over there. See how true that perspective is; you could walk among those trees. Now look at the sea-scape. Don’t you see that there is something just a little wrong about the colors? The water hasn’t the solid, rolling look of a real ocean, and—”

For half an hour he talked, not pedantically, but in the simple conversational way of a man who knows his subject and wants to share his pleasure in it. Louise saw with secret delight that Paul was genuinely interested.

“By the way, Louise,” said Collins finally, “it just occurs to me that you used to paint. In fact you were supposed to be quite a budding genius. Are you keeping it up?”

“No,” she replied laughing in embarrassment, “if I ever had any genius I’m afraid it’s a case of ‘the light that failed.’”

“The light of genius never fails unless it’s smothered,” he commented.

“Well,” she answered, “a baby is pretty smothering, and—”

“Look here,” said Whitman suddenly, “I guess the fact of the matter is that I’m the smotherer.”

Her Birthright

“No,” said Louise quickly, “that isn’t true. I have just lost interest. I was thinking of it today. I don’t long to paint as I used to. The baby and the housework keep me busy, and I seem to be quite contented.”

“If that is true,” said Collins, seriously, “it certainly is a shame. You mean that you have given up the immense pleasure of real work—of striving after the unattainable, for the pitiful satisfaction of doing your drudgery well. It’s a case of Esau and the mess of pottage.”

“Oh,” she laughed, “I don’t think I have sold mine entirely. I have dabbled a little since we came west. That little sketch in the parlor that you seemed to like was mine.”

“I suspected it,” said Collins, calmly, “but I meant every word of what I said about it. It’s good. It’s the real thing. I’m positive I can sell it for a hundred or so if you care to part with it.”

“No,” said Whitman quickly, “I want that sketch myself. It’s the first picture I ever saw that I cared for.”

Collins staid until midnight, and then Whitman left also to take him to his train. The next morning at breakfast Paul began courageously:

“Louise, I believe that if the dog in the manger had ever learned to like hay himself, he would not have been so mean about the matter. He probably thought it was all foolishness for the cow to eat the stuff. I’m ashamed of myself my dear, and I’m sorry. I want you to go on with your painting and

Her Birthright

I want you to educate me as Collins' wife did him.
Will you do it?"

For answer she reached a hand across the table
and Paul pressed it tenderly.

When he had gone, Louise stood at the window
and looked across at her favorite scene with shining
eyes. She knew just how she would begin to paint
it.

The Disciplinarian

Thomas Carmichael was one of the pioneers of the Sound country and all the people in the valley loved him. His large heart yielded sympathy as his broad acres yielded harvests and his farmhouse was a caravansary from which no traveler was ever turned away. And this capacious farmhouse with its labyrinthic interior enabled his daughter Jennie to elude the household order of rising with the lark.

This shrewd and tactful Jennie was soft and round and dimpled and pink, the baby of the family and pampered withal, notwithstanding her father's efforts to bring her up in the way she should go. Her winters were spent in a boarding school and her summers in the hammock and in making raids on the pantry between meals. Also, she exerted some time and energy in trying to find a place to sleep where her father could not find her and get her up at sunrise in the morning.

When breakfast was well under way and the family and its helpers were awake and abroad, it was Uncle Tom's habit to make a roundup of the house to find Jennie and get her out of bed in time for breakfast. This was no small part of the morning's work, for Jennie changed her bed every time her father discovered where she slept and it was often difficult to locate her. But Thomas Carmichael's interests were manifold and his attention had often

The Disciplinarian

to be withdrawn from his sluggish daughter and given to more important matters, whereby Jennie profited.

Among his civic responsibilities was the chairmanship of the board of directors of the Rhododendron School. He sent no children to the school, himself, his own having married and gone their way except Andrew and Jennie, who were supposed to have outgrown the district school. But his interest in the local seat of learning was none the less deep and he discharged his responsibility faithfully.

When harvest was in full swing and all hands in the field hurrying in with the hay, a young woman from another community came to the house to apply to Uncle Tom for the winter school. They told her that he was in the field with the men, and invited her to stay over night and see him at supper time, which invitation she accepted. The need of some repairs to the machinery took Mr. Carmichael to the station that afternoon and he did not reach home until late at night, making it impossible for the teacher to see him until morning.

The delay made no difference. It was expected that Uncle Tom would give her the school because it was hard to refuse a woman at any time, also because his son Andrew had already spoken for her. Andrew's interest in the young woman lay in the fact that he had met her at country dances down the river valley and had gotten himself engaged to her. To be sure, Andrew's engagements were not taken very seriously by any one except himself and the woman engaged, because there had

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been so many of them. He had been making engagements since he was in his teens, and the girls in the neighborhood who had once been engaged to Andrew Carmichael were married and happy and numbered their children by twos and by threes.

But one young woman near by, to whom he had pledged his faith while he was yet a minor, was biding her time. Clemmie Whiteside did not want revenge, she wanted Andrew. She knew his character and she knew his past; she knew all of his weaknesses, and she wanted Andrew. She was not handsome, red-haired and lofty, as was Mary Hamilton, the teacher, but she knew what she wanted and she could wait.

Not long after Miss Hamilton was installed in the house to await the return of Uncle Tom, led by some instinct, Clemmie Whiteside came over to sit in the hammock with Jennie and by some process of telepathy impressed the thought upon Jennie that she must ask her to stay all night; and while Mrs. Carmichael and the women were at work in the kitchen, Jennie was sent up stairs to make ready a room for Miss Hamilton, who had been left reading in the living room. Clemmie went up with Jennie. Half-way up the stairs she stopped to steal a glance from ambush at the girl who had supplanted her. Andrew had deserted the haymakers as soon as he had learned that Mary Hamilton was in the house and had found his way to her presence. He was in his happiest mood. He was bantering her and calling her "Mary Carmichael," and singing snatches of Scottish folklore to her.

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“You are fit to be a queen’s maid of honor, any-day,” the girls heard him say, “and you shall live to wear the name of two of Mary Stuart’s maids of honor, and surpass them both in beauty.” And then he trailed off into the swan song of another Mary Hamilton who lived three hundred years before her:

“Last night there were four Marys, tonight there’ll be but three;

There were Mary Beaton and Mary Seaton and Mary Carmichael and me.”

“Do you know who the other one was, my red-haired sweetheart,” he challenged. “She was Mary Hamilton; and I know another Mary Hamilton, a modern Mary Hamilton, who will be Mary Carmichael before the year is out, and who will have all the graces of them both. I only asked dad to give you the school so we could have you in the house and I could make love to you every day.”

But it became apparent to Clemmie on the stairs that Mary Hamilton was hard to court; and that she seemed only half in love with the ardent Andrew. She secretly exulted. “Come on,” she said to the waiting Jennie, “we have work to do up stairs. Where are you going to put her to sleep?”

“Don’t know,” answered Jennie. “Don’t know where to sleep myself, to keep out of dad’s way.”

“Does he still whip you in the morning to get you out of bed?”

“Yes, he does, if I don’t keep out of his way. He can’t always find me.”

“Where did you sleep last night?”

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“In the room under the hemlocks.”

“Did he find you?”

“Yes, and he will be back there again in the morning, looking for me.”

“Well, put her in there! Put her in there!”

Jennie giggled. “Yes, but I don’t know where we can go, ourselves, there are so many people in the house in haytime.”

“That room opens on the veranda,” suggested Clem. “Put her in the hemlock room, and we can sleep on the veranda. We can rig up some kind of a curtain and make a bed on the veranda.” Jennie agreed.

In the morning they were awakened by the sound of a shingle at work in the hemlock room, as they called it, and looking through the window they saw Uncle Tom bringing it down on the sleeping girl and shouting:

“Now, will you get up? Now, will you get up!”

“A red head shot up from the pillows and a terrified voice answered:

“Oh! yes, yes, I’m getting up! I’m getting up!”

“When she got possession of her faculties she saw glaring over her an old man who looked like Andrew, and she knew it must be his father. She turned on him with scorching eyes:

“I am getting up, yes indeed! and I am going just as soon as I get dressed, and if this is the way you treat people who come to your house, I am glad to know it before I am led into marrying the son of a man like you!”

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All this went on while Uncle Tom was recovering his breath and taking in the situation. He was as much surprised at the red head which came up out of the pillows as *she* was at the shingle. He stared and stammered and choked, then bolted for the door. He did not stop until he reached the hay-barn and jumped into the hay to hide.

"What under heaven is the matter, father?" asked Andrew, who was feeding the stock. "You look as if you had broken a blood-vessel!"

"I don't know whether I have or not," answered the old man, "but I know I've broken your engagement!"

"What! What! What do you mean!" exclaimed his son.

"I've spanked the teacher! I thought she was Jennie and I took a shingle to her to get her out of bed! I suppose she will go and get out a warrant and have me arrested, and I don't blame her if she does! I ought to be locked up in an insane asylum for such a blasted blunder as that! I feel as if I ought to go to town and surrender to the marshal."

Not Aunt Millie and Jennie and Clemmie and Andrew combined could placate the injured Mary. She took her departure in lofty indignation, throwing her engagement ring at Andrew's feet.

Not until Clemmie Whiteside was Andrew Carmichael's wife by all the authority of the law and the church did Jennie tell the secret of Andrew's broken engagement.

“The Fine Country”

AWARDED SECOND PRIZE

Helga was happy. She sang as she made the toothsome small Christmas cakes with Elsa puddling with a bit of dough at the other end of the fine table Oscar had made from the boards of a packing box.

“It’s the fine Christmas we will have,” chirruped Helga shaking a spoon playfully at little Oscar who lay in his basket and stretched his thin little arms toward his mother with a wan smile.

“It’s the fine country. Is it not? Yes?” the happy mother prattled on. “Green grass right to the door and it Christmas, and the Christmas tree growing on the hill behind the lot and such greens —” Her eyes came to rest upon a wreath of Washington holly, gay with a bow of red tarlatan, thriftily saved from a fruit basket, that hung in the window.

The Sandgrens had seen hard times. First, there came the illness of Mother Sandgren, the expensive operation that was not successful, and the simple funeral that had swallowed up the last of the savings. Then came the strike with Oscar out of work, and the little family shifting to a poorer tenement, and Oscar’s being obliged to let his insurance “go back,” and many days when the cupboard rivaled Mother Hubbard’s for bareness.

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Into these troubled anxious days little Oscar was born, pale and puny. Often there was no fire in the poor little rooms. Helga snuggled her frail baby in the feather bed and trembled at the thought of the winter.

Then came news of a far country of wonderful climate and an abundance of work. Mother Sandgren's hand-woven sheets and table covers and the quaint lace collars of strong thread and intricate pattern procured the tickets to Seattle. The poor little cottage on the ragged outskirts of the city; with the red rambler stretching its bare runners along its frail porch, looked like Heaven after the crowded tenement. Little Oscar lay in his basket under the naked rambler and breathed in the air smelling of kelp and invigorating with a tang of salt and stopped his pitiful moaning.

Each day Oscar went thankfully to his job wherever chance or good fortune called him and looked forward hopefully to the spring and steady employment in his own calling.

“For the Christmas,” smiled Oscar, slipping a gold coin into his wife's hand.

“Five dollars!” marveled Helga with happy wonder, “so much can we have? A rocking chair and a rug it will buy, and a Teddy for little Oscar and a Kewpie for Elsa.”

That was the way Helga found Miss Grace. “It's the church ladies' rummage sale for the grand bargains,” Mrs. Kruppner told Helga.

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Miss Grace's booth was in a hubbub. There had been a near-accident. Investigation proved a badly torn gown was the worst of it.

"It's like new, I can fix it," offered Helga, "my mother do the fine sewing in the old country."

While the skilled needle flew in and out, Helga, with little Oscar tucked under one arm and Elsa, a flaxen-haired little fairy, pressed close to the other side, opened her heart to the kindly inquisitive young ladies. The hard, hard days of the strike, the bright little cottage "all to our own-selves," and the happy Christmas-making under the leafless rambler, all came out.

And, lo, the purchasing power of that gold coin! a really good rocker, a serviceable rug for the little house, a cosy lounging jacket for Oscar, an open-and-shut-eyed dolly for Elsa, a Teddy bear, a woolly dog, and a red ball for little Oscar, not to mention a dainty apron and a string of beads for Helga herself.

Winter flowed on into spring. Little Oscar grew plump and frolicsome. Helga worked happily in her garden.

"So early the lettuce and the peas," she marveled to Mrs. Kruppner. "The fine country! Is it not? Yes? In the old country all the time it is the wars. The mothers raise their babies for the guns—ugh."

Then came the promise of Oscar's steady work. "Tomorrow, I begin," he exulted, pulling the rocker upon the rug and Helga upon his knee, with a glass of beady brown home-brew held high, he toasted the

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fine job. "The pay will be so fine. Soon we take out the insurance one time more. Maybe some day we buy the little place. Little Oscar will go to the free school and get to be the boss. The fine country! Is it not? Yes?"

It was thus Miss Grace found them. "A Rembrandt! A Rembrandt," she cried at sight of the tableau.

In an hour she was back with a present for Helga. It was a small framed print of Rembrandt with his wife, Saskia, upon his knee. He held aloft a glass of wine. "An Hour to Happiness and to Wine," she interpreted for Helga.

The next day, as Helga worked contentedly in her garden, a workman appeared, rolling his hat in embarrassment and stammering his tale with sorrow-choked gasps. At last, Helga understood. Industry had taken its toll. It was Oscar. Her heart died within her. The springs of happiness ran dry. She had seen this come to a score of women. Now it had come to her. She could not have quoted Kipling:

"Lift ye the stone or cleave the wood to make a path
more fair or flat—

Lo, it is black already with blood some son of Martha spilled for that.

Not as a ladder from Earth to Heaven, not as an altar to any creed

But simple service, simply given, to his own kind in their common need."

but in her heart she knew the law and it crushed her to an inarticulate stupified thing. Dumbly she

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sat in the undertaker's room beside her loved clay and held the cold hand that had held the glass of ale to toast the fine job.

“So fine the pension you will get,” comforted Mrs. Kruppner. “It is twenty by the month and five for each of the three children, Mrs. Slavonski gets for her man.”

But Helga recked nothing of employers' liabilities, and of pensions. Oscar, her Oscar was gone. She seemed deprived of all power to move on into the blackness ahead. Tearless and stricken, she sat in the rocker on the rug and gazed with unseeing eyes at the Rembrandt, her brain shocked out of all capacity for thought. The children, their pinafores soiled and their pretty faces unwashed, crouched in a corner over the battered Christmas toys, silent and joyless.

It was thus the charity commissioner found things at the little cottage, for it appeared there was to be no pension after all. A tardy enrollment, a trumped-up charge of carelessness,—somewhere the corporation lawyer found a loophole. That was his business, to find loopholes.

The conditions at the little cottage confirmed the reports brought to the juvenile court. The charity commissioner had to do his duty. At last he pierced the pall lying over Helga's mind and she was made to understand.

“Give up my babies,” she shrieked, clasping both darlings to her breast.

“The Home will give them good care,” soothed the officer, “and you could go out to service.”

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“Without my babies, I not cook; I not eat; I not live,” cried Helga panic-stricken. “They take my Oscar. They not have my babies. I work. The garden! the fine sewing! little Oscar go to the free school! he get to be the boss. My Oscar say it.”

But the officer shrugged his shoulders and bore them away to the juvenile court. It was his duty. Rumors of all this reached Miss Grace. In the court she made her plea and the case was given into her hands.

The place she secured for Helga was in a large department store. Helga was grateful. In the little housekeeping rooms down town, seated in the rocker placed on the rug, her babies clasped in her arms, her eyes on the Rembrandt, the blessed tears came, at last, a long cleansing, saving flood.

“So fine the job I have,” she told Mrs. Kruppner on the last trip to the little house, “not till nine of the morning do I go to work, and a stool to sit on like any lady, and eight hours by the clock I work. And all the day, the babies so happy at the grand day nursery. So fine the lunch they have and such pretty manners and games they learn, and only the few cents to pay. And at night,—” she folded her arms passionately over her breast and spoke with a tense fierceness—“they are mine, mine. We sit in the rocker on the rug and look at the fine picture and feel Oscar right by.”

But the hard times crowded their way over the mountains into this favored land. Trade was slow at the big store. There were anxious whispers

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among the shop girls. "Last come; first go," flung out one with meaning looks at Helga.

The approach of Christmas brought a slightly brisker trade, but still below the usual Holiday mark.

"So tired my feet," panted Helga dropping upon her stool

"There'll be plenty of rest after Christmas," grimly from a dark browed girl at the notion counter.

"Wouldn't wonder if there would be some vacations passed around for Christmas presents in the next pay envelopes," mirthlessly laughed a big blonde by the thread cabinet.

"Ah, cut it out," ordered the dark one gruffly, "she's got kids."

Again Helga understood. Her pay envelope contained one of the predicted vacations. Laid off; no job; the rent; the babies! Miss Grace in California! too well she understood. What could she do against the hard times? Even her Oscar had been powerless.

All night, she lay wide-eyed, dry-eyed, her babies pressed close to her side. She tried to think of the Christ child. She tried to recall what the kind matron at the nursery had said about the Father of the fatherless and the Friend of the widows. But through her despairing mind beat the refrain: no job! the babies! they would take them away.

Next morning—Christmas morning—she remembered the lesson of the juvenile court and tidied the little rooms and washed and dressed the babies with

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care and gave them the stockings filled with the simple presents.

Then came the dapper little man with his blanks. She was expecting him. It had come. Her babies were to be torn from her.

Dully she answered his questions. Yes, she was an American citizen. Yes, her husband was dead. Yes, she had been in the state one year.

On down the list he went. The last question, twice repeated, galvanized her stunned brain into startled activity. What was he saying? Would she maintain a home for her children if granted a pension by the state?

A pension! A pension for what? For being a mother.

Slowly Helga took it in. Would she maintain a home for her children! *Would she!* She laughed and she cried. She hugged her babies as if she would never let them go. She wanted to kiss the hand of the kind man. And oh, what a Christmas they had.

The next day she scrubbed and polished the little house with the naked rambler running over its frail porch.

"It's the fine pension I will have," she chatted to Mrs. Kruppner. "With the garden and the fine sewing we will do fine. It's twenty by the month I'll get from the state until little Oscar is fifteen. By then he be through the free school. He work. Soon he get to be the boss. The fine country! Is it not? Yes?"

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